
Challenges & Best Practices of Digital Marketing in the Education Sector

Dr (Prof) Gopal S Jahagirdar,
Associate Professor, SCMIRT, Bavdhan, Pune.
gopalsjahagirdar@gmail.com

Abstract

In recent years, people have been watching the rapid growth of the Internet of Things (IoT) across the world. People could adapt to the exciting digital trend business and at the same time a new dimension of understanding. Businesses have been taking the opportunity of using IoT to provide new technologies and service delivery models to achieve a wide Digital marketing. Things like online video, apps, virtual reality, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, motion graphics, chat bots, web design, UX design, social media content and social influencers are hot topics.

Thinking and designing your marketing strategies, especially for YouTube marketing, from this very moment will help you to succeed in 2018. These days are your opportunity to be on step further your competitors. This paper proposes importance of digital marketing in educational sector, and suggests the advertisement campaign for promotion of education sector.

Keywords: Internet of Things (IoT), Digital Marketing, Artificial Intelligence.

1.0. Introduction.

Digital Marketing is the promotion of products or services through various digital channels to reach the target audience. It is the key to effective promotion of brands with cost effectiveness. However, it ensures that the right message reaches the right person at the right time. In this internet age, in order to specify the existence of the business, online presence is compulsory. Adopting and altering has become the necessary step in the path of success.

With the advent of new technologies, the internet has become the major search source for everything. The increased usage of internet has a great influence on the education sector. The majority of the students are the users of the internet. Right from the school to even post graduate, as every time they come across filling of exam form, sharing notes, documents, events pictures, and so on. The Internet has become the major search platform for all, starting from courses, schools or colleges, study material and even fee payment method has become online. This indicates that the educational institutions must mark their presence online to reach more students, existing as well as prospects.

Education sector being a demanding one deals with new viewers each year. Budget is the major constraint in the promotion of educational institutions to attract prospects each year. In olden days, even parents are searching online for best schools and colleges. This has become possible because of digital media unlike personally visiting the educational institutions. They are expect the entire details about the institution online like facilities, faculty, fees, course curriculum and extracurricular activities, and especially for searching the path. The online forms for admission process and other queries, by the parents started judging the institutions by their website and online presence.

This is the area implementation of digital marketing in the education sector. It is the best and effective solution to reach these requirements. It's time to aim for new opportunities, for the application of digital marketing in any industry, one must first define the target audience and their persona along with their requirements and pain points and their basic online behavior. According to

those details, we may choose the right channel for promotion, which reaches the maximum target audience.

2.0. Objectives:

The objectives behind writing this paper are to achieve the best practices that have been either followed or tend to follow in the forthcoming period:

1. To understand the best practices in digital marketing,
2. To know the criticality of following best practices among educational sector,
3. To enhance the awareness of digital marketing applications,
4. To understand the different digital marketing campaign.

3.0. Necessity of digital marketing.

Glance of several of the best practices for digital marketing in the education sector are below.

- 3.1. Create or Update a Website:** Website being the primary online presence for the business, it must be unique and effective in communicating the right purpose of it. Websites' being the sources of information and knowledge, a website of an educational institute should be even more resourceful. It must convey your Universal Selling Points (USP), with special and important things you are offering to the audience and must be motivational and trustworthy for students, their parents as well as for the faculty. A website must be a solution for the possible questions of the students, prospects, and parents. Create or update the existing website properly with the details about the institution establishment, campus and environment, courses, faculty and their experience, facilities, and amenities, benefits etc. in an organized way. And don't forget that the web page must be mobile optimized, as there are more of mobile internet users.
- 3.2. Maintain Blogs to Motivate:** A blog attracts a lot of audiences. Blogs are sources of various information and knowledge. A regular blog with education elements and current affairs attracts the students. The blog is not only to promote the institute but also to motivate the students as well as faculty to learn, write and share the information. It helps to attain high standards in the industry through attracting prospects as well as motivating students. Involvement of faculty and students in writing the blog will be advantageous to get the new content regularly. By addressing your ideas of education blogs and college/university sites are providing to the audience and what are the current trends in the education sector. Since the people believe in the latest knowledge, a blog must be up to date in order to gain the reader's interest. As the education blogs are mainly targeted for students, they must provide information about trending topics, which every student would like to know.
- 3.3. Search Engine Optimization:** Content Optimization helps in high search rankings of the website or the blog, which helps in reaching more students and prospects. Best and relevant keywords help in driving more traffic to the site. Need to have knowledge of keywords and other marketing strategies using by other educational institute's websites and education blogs. In order to create and optimize a great content, quick adoption of industry trends is important. A regular following of other education blogs and relevant sites will be very helpful. Presenting the content uniquely than other blogs and sites is a recommended thing. Not only on-page SEO, but off-page SEO helps in attaining new audience, by linking with the relevant education blogs and websites of the universities.

- 3.4. **Engage Through Social Media:** Social Media is the popular and most followed, it will be very advantageous to promote it. Promoting the institute through useful and quality content by targeting the social media communities of parents, students and faculty will be advantageous. Unlike traditional marketing channels, it engages in two-way conversation. Different social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram etc. They help to reduce the student acquisition cost. Through social marketing, we not only can reach the audience but also can showcase the different side of the institution, in a friendly manner. The social platform allows the audience to directly interact with the management and find solutions for any queries. Since it is a two-way approach, management can also approach the student as well as parents personally and convince them for conversion.
- 3.5. **Promote Through Paid Channels:** Search and display ad campaigns are the useful ways to market the educational institutions. Through Google AdWords, we can run ad campaigns targeting a specific audience and specific locations. Another advantage for educational institutions with ad campaigns is that we can run them whenever there is a necessity. For example, season between the completion and start of the academic year. The chance of lead generation is more through ad campaigns, as they lead the audience to data capture forms on the website. It is the effective way to drive more traffic to website and cost-effective way for student acquisition. Usage of relevant and best keywords will help in increasing number of impressions.
- 3.6. **Email Marketing is Effective:** Email is the most cost-effective way to reach a number of prospects. Mail content must act like a key for the solution of audiences' requirement. The initial step must be the creation of separate email lists for each category of target customers i.e. students, parents and as per course specifications and batches. Create the content that matters for the audience. The message must be effective and precise. A great title line can be a catchy element. Email must be mobile friendly, in order to engage more audience.
- 3.7. **Re-target for Conversion:** Through different channels of digital marketing, there is a lot of scope for lead generation. In order to convert the prospect into the customer, we must re-target them till they convert. Through pre-scheduled follow-up emails and social media posts, we can have a hold on our target audience. As the targets for educational institutions are students and parents, recalling them to the business is not a difficult task, if planned effectively. Description of the institute's achievements, alumni achievements etc are the key for re-targeting the audience.
- 3.8. **Lead Generation and Customer Relationship Management:** As we have already known that through Google ad campaigns, lead generation will be more. Buying leads from the third-party vendors and education portals may be other best choice for it. A good customer relationship management will help the institute to maintain best long-term relationships with the audience. By auto-importing the leads and queries and follow-up each lead will result in better conversion rate.
- 3.9. **Manage Online Reputability:** Online reputation management is what matters for a business much equal to profits. Building an online reputation by maintaining best blog contents, campus videos, testimonials from achievers and great inspirational personalities, alumni feedback, faculty interviews, successful researchers, campus news will help to attain audience attention. It creates interest in the mind of the audience and leads to the online reputation. By implementing digital marketing in the education sector, we can increase online reputation for the institutes.

4.0. Importance of Digital Marketing.

The major advantage that the educational institutes' get through digital marketing is being recognized. As there are several educational institutions getting established every year, there will be a huge competition in the industry. It is not easy to compete with them only through traditional marketing strategies.

Digital marketing in the education sector helps not only to compete in the industry but also in many other ways as follows:

- 4.1. **Profitability:** Digital Marketing channels being very much affordable and at the same time reaches the more target audience in a limited time. It is very much beneficial to the educational institutions to invest in online marketing channels such as social media, email marketing, RSS feeds with minimum prices to reach the maximum audience.
- 4.2. **Immediate Feedback:** Online marketing channels being the fastest means of communication, promotional messages can meet the target audience within a short span of time and there will be immediate feedback from them. Nowadays, students being the active users of social media, feedback will be instantaneous from mediums like Facebook, Twitter etc. A feedback is a source of inspiration and many ideas, which can be used for further promotions of the institute.
- 4.3. **Measurable Results:** Unlike traditional marketing campaigns, the performance and results of various digital marketing campaigns can be tracked using tools like Google analytics. With the available statistics, we can change the marketing strategies in a way that benefits the institute. Digital marketing in the education sector helps to focus deeply on each strategy and building a better marketing mix.
- 4.4. **High Conversions:** As digital channels help to reach a number of target audiences through social networks and emails, they will result in high conversions. Because emails are the right manner for educational institutions to directly target the audience.
- 4.5. **Brand Image:** Having online business presence and promotions through various digital channels automatically creates brand awareness in the audience. But by maintaining the websites, blogs and other channels effectively will result in a great brand image of the educational institution in the audience. As we already know maintenance of digital channels has become a judgment criterion for good business organization.
- 4.6. **Outsourcing:** Implementation of digital marketing is not an easy task. In order to have a great online reputation, outsourcing the digital marketing services is a better option. Educational institutions being very responsible places for carving the students' career, it is very important for the management to focus more on students.

A good digital marketing agency could help to plan and implement the digital promotional programs perfectly. Instead of recruiting one or two digital marketing executives, having a team of experienced professionals and creative digital marketing experts for promotion is very much advantageous. By outsourcing the digital marketing, we can get high-quality accurate services from talented and creative professionals with low operating costs around the year. We can save time, efforts and manpower of the institute, as creation and optimization of content for each of the digital channels is a difficult task which is practically not possible in the education sector. Another advantage of outsourcing digital marketing in the education sector is that we are assured of return on investment. And as digital marketing experts strive to learn and implement new techniques, our

digital channels will be up to the mark of current industry trends and we will have the privilege of working with the latest technology.

5.0. Challenges of utilization of digital marketing.

Most of the time you should consider the utilization of digital marketing for your institution:

5.1. Cost-effective: Digital marketing is very cost-effective; it is the best medium to attract a broader audience at little to no cost. With the help of an educational marketing agency, the institution can get excellent results with smaller investments and can also avail services like search engine optimization, social media marketing, mobile marketing and email marketing. It implies that educational institutes can focus on a more significant audience at a low cost, and achieve greater benefits.

5.2. Enhance Brand Awareness: Digital marketing is the best way to generate brand awareness through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc., as they comprise a greater section of the audience. This can help enhance followers and improve the conversion rate as well.

5.3. Facilitates performance tracking: You can track campaign performance with the help of relevant digital marketing tools, which can help extensively when it comes to measuring and tracking the overall effectiveness of your marketing campaign. This marketing strategy can also be changed if the statistics of the institution are on a low. Digital marketing in the education sector helps to redirect the focus of the strategy, so that can help optimise the marketing mix.

5.4. High Conversion Rate: Online educational marketing platforms receive a high conversion rate. Messaging platforms like SMS and e-mails are some of the forms of digital marketing that receive a high response rate due to the fact that they are personal and educational institutes can easily reach their targeted audience in an effective way.

5.5. Digital Presence: Forming a great digital presence is imperative for any institution, and the education sector is no exception to this fact. With the majority of people finding their information online, it's highly recommended to establish a strong digital presence to make sure that students and parents can discover you on these channels and consider your institution while making their choice.

5.6. Promote through paid channels: Search and display ads are one of the most effective ways to market an educational institution. Lead generation can yield more results through ad campaigns, as it directs a large section of the online audience towards your site. This is the most appropriate way to drive traffic to the website. Usage of relevant and best keywords will also help in increasing the total number of impressions.

5.7. Manage online reputation: Nowadays, managing your online reputation is a must. This can be done by promoting quality blogs, capturing videos, garnering testimonials from achievers and great inspirational personalities, gaining and implementing alumni feedback, and promoting positive campus news to gain the attention of the audience. This generates interest in the minds of the audience, which leads to a quality online reputation.

Most of an educational institution to be successful in today's era, it's a must to utilize and implement a comprehensive and well-thought-out digital marketing strategy. This digital marketing strategy should be ideated and implemented properly so that the educational institution can enjoy all the benefits, such as high levels of student enrolment, improved cost-effectiveness, garnering a strong reputation, and also attaining a higher conversion rate and a higher rate of return when it comes to your investment. The time has come for every institution to trigger a long-term digital plan with a

carefully thought out objective so that it can amplify its brand identity and presence. One of the most effective ways to do so is by enlisting the services of an online education marketing agency to help facilitate this transformation into a new era of digital marketing.

6.0 Five steps to a successful education sector marketing strategy.

Education sector marketing is disreputably challenging and there are certain hurdles include budget limitations and having to appeal to a completely new audience each year – and with the rise of digital marketing channels, marketing your educational institution effectively is becoming even more competitive and complex.

Students (and their parents) now expect online entry forms and a presence on social media, and candidate recruitment becoming a year-round activity – and as digital channels continue to evolve, even established educational suppliers should be re-evaluating their marketing strategy annually.

7.0 Ideas to Add Creativity to Advertisement Campaigns.

To be truly effective when telling your university's story, the content ideas behind each campaign need to be convincing and true. The university's voice and tone come alive through content. If you're struggling to think of creative ways to bring new life to your university's marketing campaign, one of the simplest things you can do is take a walk around campus and ask students why they chose your university. The parents and students some question in their mind and answer such questions help them. Identify the audiences you want to reach and target through university content. Once you have content ideas, find a way to tell these stories. Here are a few of our favorite methods to take your digital marketing scene from barely passing to the top of the class.

1. Campus Listicles: The word 'listicle' can cause a few eye rolls, but they can be a fun and informative way to display information about your university. The true beauty of a listicle is that it's typically easy to put together.

2. Behind-the-Scenes Stories: What planning goes into new student orientation? Who decorates the campus for homecoming? Most marketing materials show the finished product or highlight the completed event, but giving potential students a peek at the activity happening behind the scenes – especially for student-led events – will help them picture what extracurricular activities they might enjoy.

3. Interactive Quizzes: For high school students, digging through a university's website trying to find the perfect major can be overwhelming. Make this process easier by creating an interactive quiz to help them narrow down their ideal choice for a major or minor. You're not limited to academic ideas – nearly every campus topic can be turned into an interactive quiz.

4. Campus Spotlights: Let's face it – some departments on campus might not get tons of love in terms of content. Sports and big campus events are great to share, but they're not the only factors of a well-rounded college experience.

Highlight guest speakers at the engineering school or innovative graduate research projects. Shining a light on different campus departments allows prospective students to get a feel for your university's academics.

5. "Humans of University": We know it's been done many times, but nothing showcases like culture and personality of your university like a "Humans of University" series. Interviewing students and faculty will, no pun intended, humanize an institution that may seem scary and intimidating to future students.

6. Audio/Video Event Coverage: Every school has its traditions, which often include school musicals, talent shows, and other performances. Use the pictures or videos you've taken at these events and turn them into slideshows and presentations. You can share these videos on Facebook, YouTube, or even LinkedIn's SlideShare to reach new audiences.

7. Branch Out to New Platforms: You aren't limited to Facebook and Twitter when promoting your brands. On large campuses, different parts of the student body gravitate to different social platforms. Some are glued to Snapchat, while others have dedicated Tumblr accounts. It's important to know which students are on each platform and how they're using them.

The tone you use on Facebook might be completely different than the one you use on Tumblr, but that isn't a bad thing. You may be able to be more casual on different platforms. It's about engaging with your student audience in a way that speaks to them.

8. Social Media Takeovers: Rule #1 of marketing to new students: understand that they know what you're doing. Generation Z has grown up in a digital world, so don't try to pull off subtle marketing stunts – they'll see right through them.

The solution? Let the students do the talking for you. Hand over the keys to your Snapchat, Instagram, or Twitter to a savvy student for a few hours and let them show potential students that no, it's not scripted; your campus is really just that awesome.

9. Student Blogs: Similar to a social media takeover but with a little more control, hire students to write blogs for the university's website. These blogs will show a real and authentic experience that conveys the school's culture better than anyone else could. If you have a large international student population, blogs written by current international students may help ease any concerns incoming students have as they move to a new country.

10. Info-graphics Featuring University Data: Not only are infographics fun to read, but the amount of information you can draw attention to is limitless. From the admissions process to available majors, and even to the university's culture – infographics allow you to get your message out quickly and clearly.

11. Let Your Mascot Market for You: If your school has a strong mascot presence on campus and in the community, let it do the marketing for you.

12. Quirky, Campus-Specific Content: Know what sets your campus apart from other universities. Maybe your university has infamous squirrels or fun campus folklore. Prospective students are interested in the quirky traditions of their future school.

13. Student-Oriented Guides: If you have a lot of information to convey but an infographic just won't cut it, consider making an extensive guide for potential students.

14. Playlists for Campus Events: There's nothing like connecting through music. Football games, spring break, and a new semester can inspire a campus-friendly playlist. Apps like Spotify make it easy to curate themed, digital playlists that are easily shareable among university fans. You can make the playlist a shared experience by using social platforms to ask for recommendations.

15. Drip Email Marketing Campaigns: Students will receive many, many emails from schools they are interested in, don't let your emails add to the noise. Create drip email marketing campaigns to address the questions, needs, and concerns of potential students.

One idea is to start off your email campaign answering the most frequently asked questions, but as students get more familiar with the basics, add in information about the culture and community of your

campus. Eventually, start sending out ideas of things to do in the surrounding community and guides to various aspects of college life.

16. Campus Beauty Shots: Never doubt the power of a campus beauty shot. Featuring a beloved building, a favorite study spot, or campus greenery is a simple way to created brand content for your social media channels.

17. Create Custom Snap Filters for Events: So there's a football game happening on Saturday, or maybe a campus visit weekend is coming up... whatever the event may be, now's the time to consider using Snap (previously Snapchat) filters during the event to get potential students engaged with your brand. Not only that, all of their friends will see the filters and wonder, "How can I be a part of that?" Be sure to schedule ahead of time since only 3 filters per physical location.

18. User-Generated Content from Campus Events: Never overlook the possibilities of user-generated content. On any college campus, something is always happening. Encourage the use of branded hashtags for campus events. Students can tweet, Instagram, or Facebook their own photos and messages right to one place using your hashtag. The content opportunities don't end at the event. You can curate user content later in a blog post or list article later.

8.0. Conclusion.

For an educational institution to reach the goal of success, digital marketing is the path. We are not saying to completely avoid traditional marketing, because offline reputation is the foundation for any online actions, especially for an industry like education sector. But, digital marketing in the education sector has committed to giving something big that out-stand and engage the right audience.

The education sector has become more competitive and sophisticated than ever before. This is due to the increase in the number of digital marketing agencies. In today's era of competition, institutions need to adapt to effective digital marketing strategies to go through new changes. Nowadays, the invention of the internet has totally changed the way people consume products, especially the ones related to education. Although we haven't reached the point where digital marketing has obscured traditional marketing entirely, the Indian context offers a promising premise – especially if we take the example of the education industry.

Digital marketing for education is becoming a promising platform due to the increase of web and digital media in the education sector. This sector has transformed entirely, and this is partly due to the widespread access that people have due to the internet. Therefore, educational industries should keep this in mind and work on their digital presence to reach a large number of students and parents with ease. This is one of the many reasons why digital marketing is considered to be the best option when it comes to reaching out to both students and parents.

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